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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 001899

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [NL](#) [IR](#)
SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/IRAN: DUTCH OPEN TO EU SANCTIONS

REF: A. SECSTATE 143223

[1](#)B. SECSTATE 141316

Classified By: Andrew Schofer, Political Counselor, for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: While the Dutch would prefer a "United Nations context" for any additional sanctions on Iran, they are also prepared to push for consideration of separate EU sanctions if necessary. Foreign Minister Maxime Verhagen highlighted his support for "gradual, proportional, (and) targeted" sanctions on Iran in an October 9 letter to Parliament. MFA Deputy Director General for Political Affairs Wim Geerts separately told POLCOUNS on October 12 that the Dutch were "100 percent in agreement" with the U.S. on the need for a strong and united international message to Iran. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) On October 12, POLCOUNS delivered the reftel points on Iran to the MFA's Deputy DG Geerts. Geerts reiterated that the Dutch would prefer to have the UN Security Council take the lead in applying any additional sanctions on Iran. That said, Geerts stressed that the Dutch are fully prepared to support consideration of EU sanctions against Iran. In response to reftel points on the need for the EU and other concerned parties to send a strong, clear message to Iran, Geerts said "we are 100 percent in agreement with the U.S."

[1](#)3. (SBU) Separately, in a letter sent to Parliament on October 9, FM Verhagen also stressed the importance of keeping "additional sanctions in a UN context. If that channel is blocked, however, Verhagen argued "the EU should consider tightening the EU sanctions regime, together with the United States and other like-minded countries....additional sanctions should be gradual, proportional, (and) targeted." "One should think in the first place of freezing assets of more companies...and individuals supplementary to the existing lists of sanctions (as well as) the expansion of the list of person to who no visa is issued." At the same time, the Netherlands "will continue to support...efforts to find a solution to the nuclear question through negotiations."

[1](#)4. (C) COMMENT: The U.S. timetable for action -- adoption of EU measures between now and November -- may be faster than the Dutch expect. FM Verhagen's letter noted "At this stage, this explicitly concerns preparation of measures, and not yet a decision or implementation." Nevertheless, the Dutch are committed to using the EU to maintain pressure on Iran to abandon its nuclear weapons program, even in the absence of a UNSC resolution. The GAERC conclusion of October 15 matches the Dutch approach. END COMMENT.
Arnall